

the *Adventurer*

OSHER
LIFELONG
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INSTITUTE



Term: Winter | Issue 18:5 | February 2019

MONTHLY MEETING

Unearthing the African American Dream in the 19th C. Midwest

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019

8:45 am—Registration, Light Refreshments

9:30 am—Welcome & Announcements



Amid sweeping economic changes, rising immigration, and intensifying debates about slavery,

white mid-nineteenth-century Americans looked to the West as their “manifest destiny.” They and the New York journalist John O’Sullivan who coined that phrase rarely acknowledged or welcomed the free African Americans who, like white settlers, put down roots and planted crops across the Upper Mississippi Valley. Yet rural families of color richly shaped the economies, cultures, and politics of the farm neighborhoods and small towns they helped to found. Jennifer Stinson, Associate Professor of History at SVSU, weaves together diverse documents written by and about nineteenth-century African American Midwesterners to explore the successes and strains that marked men’s and women’s quests to realize the full rights and dignities of American citizenship in the West.

NOTES & NEWS

- February 8-10 check out the Birch Run Hunting & Fishing Expo. Frankenmuth Credit Union Event Center. \$10 Adults.
- February 13 join Chippewa Nature Center’s Rob Maxwell to learn how to plant a vegetable garden. 6-7pm. Midland. Free.
- February 16 Downtown Midland features free carriage rides with Clydesdale horses. 6-9pm.
- February 19 visit the Saginaw SVRC Marketplace for the Chicks who Mix Event. Coffee, cocktails, food, and more. 5-7:30pm. \$25.
- February 21 is Family STEM night at the Alden B. Dow Museum in Midland. 4-8pm. Museum Admission.

CONTACT US

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SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

OLLI WISDOM

“Age should never define your limits if your heart desires it”

IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday March 13

Monthly Meeting: Cold War Polygraphs
By: John Baesler, Ph.D., SVSU
Curtiss Hall Banquet Rooms

Wednesday April 10

Monthly Meeting: First Robotics & SVSU
By: Sean Murray, Dow HS/Adrienne Cole, SVSU
Curtiss Hall Banquet Rooms

Wednesday May 8

Monthly Meeting: TBA

CHAIR'S NOTE



Hello OLLI friends,

Continuing my theme of good news (from Steven Pinker's book

Enlightenment NOW), this month's good news is about world progress in combating catastrophic famines. In November I reported that we have made great strides in reducing hunger. Part of the reason for the reduction is that we have mostly eradicated famine from Asia, China, Russia, India, and Bangladesh—from all parts of the world except Africa. Many famines have been prevented by a combination of local and international humanitarian aid when drought or flood related food crises have occurred.

We OLLI members are all old enough to remember the predictions about overpopulation and about how the world wouldn't be able to feed everyone. There were books like *Famine 1975!* and *The Population Bomb*. Now look at us! Population growth has slowed: partly because as people got out of poverty, they had fewer babies, but also because of government policy in the case of China. Our increased ability to feed our population is really impressive. We discovered ways to get more food from each parcel of land. We bred animals and plants that had more food value and fewer toxins, and were easiest to plant and harvest. We improved irrigation, plows, and organic fertilizers. The list of improvements seems endless. The result is that between 1961 and 2009 the amount of land used to grow food increased by 12 percent, but the amount of food that was grown increased by 300 percent!

Sometimes humans are so impressive!

—Carol Gohm, Advisory Board Chair

MUSICAL NOTES

Did you grow up playing a musical instrument, but let it slide once you were out of school? Did you always want to learn how to play something? Music has been shown to have several benefits beyond entertainment value in people of all ages.

Playing a musical instrument utilizes and sharpens memory and abstract thinking skills. Especially in those older people who take up a musical instrument later in life.



Additionally, playing a musical instrument can serve as a stress and anxiety reliever.

Focusing on the music takes concentration, placing worries to the back of your thoughts. Your patience may increase as well, since learning an instrument takes time and practice.

Instrumentalists also have more self-confidence and friends—which might sound ridiculous, but ensemble playing allows one to meet new and unique people and gives you a specific role, building confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

If you have an interest in learning a musical instrument or taking up music again, OLLI is working to put together a group of budding musicians to share their interest in playing. If interested, please contact the Director at keelliso@svsu.edu and let her know your interest and background.

SPONSORSHIP

OLLI has several sponsors, like Ascension, the Saginaw Art Museum, and Abbs Financial Planning, but we are always looking for new partners that might be supportive of our membership, goals, and mission.

If you know of a local business or company, please share with them that there are sponsorship opportunities at OLLI. Depending on the level a company might be able to teach a class or suggest a monthly meeting speaker. Other sponsors may help cover the cost of certain OLLI programming so that we can keep prices lower or even offer free options.

We can work with all sizes of businesses or organizations to make our partnership work for the benefit of both parties outside of defined sponsorship brackets.

Anyone seeking OLLI sponsorship opportunities may contact the OLLI Director at 989.964.4310 or keelliso@svsu.edu.



BECOME A SPONSOR

CURRENT INTEREST GROUPS

- Bridge
- Buddhist Psychology
- Choral Singing
- Cross Country Skiing
- Current Events
- Cycling
- Dinner
- Esoteric Cosmology
- Euchre
- Games
- Gardening
- Guitar
- Kayaking
- Knitting
- Lunch
- Movies
- Music Collegium
- Pickleball
- Ping Pong
- Recorder
- Recreational Biking
- Sharing the Great Courses
- Short Stories
- Stamp & Coin Collecting
- Tai Chi
- Theatre

For group leader contact info see: svsu.edu/olli

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Betty Larsen

A few years ago I read the book *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. He is the founder of EJI (Equal Justice Initiative) and has saved well over one hundred death row inmates who were wrongly convicted. This book is one of those WOW books. Since reading it, I've been following Stevenson on YouTube, TedTalks and on various podcast interviews. About one year ago, April 26, 2018, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice opened in Montgomery, Alabama. This is the first memorial in the United States dedicated to the legacy of enslaved black people, people terrorized by lynching and humiliated by Jim Crow laws, and racial segregation.

Also in Montgomery and established by Stevenson is The Legacy Museum, built on the site of a former warehouse where enslaved black people were imprisoned. By 1860, Montgomery was the capital of domestic slave trade in Alabama. Visitors become immersed in the history through the extensive research and videography that fills the 11,000 square foot exhibition.

My family, ranging from age 8 to 77, visited the memorial and museum during the holidays and each of us came away with an unparalleled exposure to this insufferable time in our history. I suggest you add this trip and experience to your bucket list.



Markers commemorating lynching throughout the country, at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, AL. (Above).

A statue depicting chained people and the American slave trade, outside the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, AL (Below).



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GROUP FOCUS: TAI CHI



Join OLLI Members Tuesdays from 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. in Ryder room 244 for this temporary Tai Chi interest group—good for your soul and your body. Bring your Tai Chi DVDs and practice with friends. This group will function through February, after which time, regular Tai Chi classes with Jim Bush will resume for those interested in signing up. For more information, please contact Wayne O'Brien at woobrien@tm.net

NEWSLETTER

“The Adventurer” is published monthly for SVSU-OLLI members at Saginaw Valley State University. Reprints of this newsletter may be obtained by calling 989.964.4475.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

February makes me shiver with every newsletter I deliver...however, according to Wanda the Weather Witch, we can expect a mild and rainy February! Let's hope for the best, here in Michigan.

February is about the time we start thinking of spring and summer here in the OLLI office—and can you blame us? What's not to love about warmer weather, longer days, and green leaves again. If you're interested in teaching a class or have a class idea for the spring/summer session, be sure to let me know before February 1st so I can get it on the books.

Speaking of spring and summer, cross your fingers for Michigan, June forecasts look wet.



Wanda

CLASS HIGHLIGHT

March Madness

Millions of casual and diehard college basketball fans watch the annual NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, commonly referred to as March Madness. This class will utilize PowerPoint slides, videos, and handouts to answer at least the following questions: What is the science of bracketology? In what manner are the 68 teams selected to make the tournament? And how can you keep track of your favorite teams using cable television, satellite radio, the Internet, and digital streaming? This very informative class will be facilitated by an adjunct mathematics instructor and alumnus of SVSU, published author, and lifelong basketball fan.

Fridays 2/1-2/22 * C127
2-4 p.m.

\$27 Members/\$54 Non-Members



TRIP HIGHLIGHT

Mazel Tov, John Lennon

Amidst continuous Vietnam War protests, newly ex-Beatled John Lennon walks into the office of Leon Wildes, an eminent immigration lawyer. As ultra-laid-back Lennon and straight-laced Wildes navigate Lennon's stormy immigration case, an unlikely and comical kinship unfolds, with both men gaining a greater understanding of friendship, personal values, and patriotism. Based on the true story of the Nixon administration's attempt to deport John Lennon. Directed by Carla Milarch, *Mazel Tov, John Lennon* features Forrest Hejkal and Phil Powers. This trip includes motor coach transportation from SVSU, performance, and lunch at Grizzly Peak Brewery Company.

Sunday, March 24
9 a.m.-7 p.m.

\$90 Members/\$110 Non-Members



We enrich.



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